

TUCSON – A proposed 280-megawatt solar-thermal energy plant in southern Arizona will not be built unless Congress extends a key tax credit set to expire at the end of the year, representatives from Abengoa Solar and Arizona Public Service told a bipartisan House panel in Tucson today.

Barbara Lockwood of Arizona Public Service and Kate Maracas of Abengoa Solar testified that the Solana Generating Station outside of Gila Bend would not be financially viable because of the high cost of solar energy without the tax credits.

Lockwood, Maracas and a host of solar energy experts from Arizona testified before a field hearing of the House Science and Technology Subcommittee on Energy and Environment at the Pima County Administrative Building in Tucson. The hearing examined opportunities and obstacles surrounding utility-scale solar power.

"Every day, we depend on foreign nations to provide us with energy," said Mitchell. "Solar energy will create quality jobs and strengthen our national security by making us more energy independent. We are at a critical tipping point, and are on the brink of making Arizona the 'Solar State.' Congress has a responsibility to do what it can to make Solana a reality and let the sun shine on our solar energy future."

Maracas, who serves as vice president of Abengoa's Arizona operations, said "the single most significant hindrance" to the expansion of solar facilities is "the lack of an enduring tax credit which is essential to the financial viability" of the facilities.

Last month the House passed an extension to the solar energy tax credit, but the measure has not been considered by the Senate.